

A DIRECTORY OF THE  
RELIGIOUS LIFE

*Church of England. Advisory Council on  
the relation of bishops and religious communities.*

**A DIRECTORY OF THE  
RELIGIOUS LIFE**

*For the Use of those Concerned with the  
Administration of the Religious Life  
in the Church of England  
(Second Edition)*

Issued by  
THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF  
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Under the Chairmanship of  
THE BISHOP OF EXETER

With the Authority of  
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## COMMENDATION

BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK

THIS Directory was first published in 1943 in order to describe and clarify the principles embodied in the many Religious Communities of men and women within the Church of England. The Advisory Committee on Religious Communities has now produced the present revision in the light of some years' experience of the value of the Directory and of the ways in which it could be improved.

The vocation to the service of God in Communities under the threefold Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience is an energy of the Holy Spirit which a Directory of this kind can never properly describe. Yet it is our hope that the Directory will assist in the understanding of this vocation and in its orderly development within the life of the Church of England. To this end we commend it, and pray that it may serve God's glory.

GEOFFREY CANTUAR:

MICHAEL EBOR:



PREFACE  
BY THE BISHOP OF EXETER

THE need for a new edition of the Directory has for long been apparent, and work on revision was started some years ago under the Chairmanship of the late Bishop of Oxford. The importance of the work which Dr Kirk did on the Advisory Council—its singular value to the Church and to the Religious Communities—is described in the minutes of the meeting of the Council held soon after his death. This minute is printed in the following section which describes the nature and work of the Council. To this tribute to the late Dr Kirk I have nothing to add, except to say how much I both fear and rejoice to follow him as Chairman of the Council.

The chief changes in the new edition of the Directory are these. First, we have altered the format. We have abolished the division into chapters, and have numbered the paragraphs in a single series, broken up by cross-headings.

Secondly, we have departed still further from the original conceptions, which underlay the preparation of the first edition, of producing a Glossary. In this present edition there is at once more detail and more firm and definitive advice.

Thirdly, the whole section on Release has been extensively rewritten and enlarged. The word is now used to denote the separation of the individual Religious from his Community, in whatever way and for whatever reason it is brought about. The Council has devoted particular care and attention to this section, because from time to time cases of "unattached Religious" have been brought to its notice. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that Religious who cut themselves off from their Community and set themselves up on their own, and Religious who are abandoned by their Communities and left, so to speak, "in the air", are a source of grave scandal. Religious are vowed to obedience within their Community. Outside of and detached from their Community they cannot discharge this vow of obedience, and their whole position becomes anomalous. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that those tragic cases where a Religious must, for one reason or

another, be detached from or detach himself from his Community, should be very carefully regulated and the subsequent status and mode of living of the released Religious exactly defined.

Fourthly, we have greatly revised the section on Chapter Government. In the first edition this section described only the experience and practice of one single Community. In this revised edition we have outlined the general principles which ought to govern the structure of Chapter Government in any Community. Communities necessarily differ from one another in greater or less degree. Yet they are all at one in this—that they are or should be governed by Chapter. It is, therefore, the general underlying principles of Chapter Government which are important. It is the duty of the different Communities to apply these principles to their own peculiar circumstances. It is our hope and belief that the general structure of Chapter Government, as here outlined in the Directory, will be a helpful and sufficient guide to any Anglican Community which has or shall have the duty of defining its Constitution.

It is the hope of the present Council that this new edition of the Directory will be as warmly welcomed and prove as helpful as did the first edition. We are deeply conscious that, under the providence of God, the work of the Anglican Religious Communities grows daily. These Communities are now, *laus Deo*, a recognized and integral part of the life of the Church. In some ways, in consequence, our work grows easier: for as the Communities mature they depend less and less on advice from outside, and less and less need a connecting link with the main body of the Church. Yet in other ways our responsibility increases: the stronger the Communities become, the greater their daily influence upon the general life of the Church. We have on the one hand to advise the Communities how best they may live in and serve that branch of the Catholic Church which is the Church of England. On the other hand, we have to advise the Church how she may best understand, use, and be served by the Communities which God has raised up in her midst. This task becomes in some ways more important and more delicate, the stronger and more vigorous the Communities become.

We issue this new edition of the Directory as a contribution to the discharge of the task laid upon us.

R. E.



## THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

WHEN in the last century the Religious Life was revived in the Church of England, the Episcopate as a whole was unwilling to accord it official recognition, sympathetic though individual Bishops sometimes were. The Communities therefore grew up as private ventures within the Church, largely ignored by the authorities.

This is happily altered now. There is an official body of the Church of England dealing with matters which concern the Religious Life and the relation between the Bishops and Communities. This body is known as the Advisory Council. The Chairman must be one of the Diocesan Bishops of the Province of Canterbury or of York, and is appointed by the two Archbishops; the Bishops of the two Provinces appoint six members to the Council, and the Communities also elect six members. The present Chairman is the Bishop of Exeter.

The Council has no coercive powers, but advises on matters referred to it either by the Bishops or by the Communities, and the amount of business transacted clearly shows the necessity of such a body. At present the Council includes four Diocesan Bishops, one Dean, and the heads of four of the Men's Communities. It is entirely clerical in its composition.

The Minute which follows was drawn up by the Dean of Wells, who was Secretary to the Council from its inception till his appointment to the Deanery in 1951. It illustrates an aspect of the late Dr Kirk's work for the Church which is in the nature of things little known by the Church at large.

The Advisory Council desires to put on record its great sense of loss in the death of the Right Reverend Kenneth Escott Kirk, Lord Bishop of Oxford, and to express its deep appreciation of his unique work for the Religious Life in the Church of England.

Dr Kirk (then Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology in the University of Oxford) was appointed by the Bishops to the Council on its foundation in 1935, but for the first two years of its life he took no part in its deliberations. His first attendance was on

February 10th, 1938, when, as Bishop of Oxford, he took the Chair in the absence of the Bishop of Wakefield. On Bishop Seaton's death soon after, Dr Kirk became our second Chairman, and from 1938 to his death in 1954 he attended all meetings, except on three occasions when he was prevented by illness.

This alone is proof of Dr Kirk's deep interest in the affairs of the Council, but it must be remembered that, in addition to guiding the Council itself, he was constantly dealing with problems, often of great complexity, submitted to him by Bishops and Communities; altogether a formidable labour for a busy diocesan Bishop physically far from strong, yet he never spared himself.

From the beginning of his Chairmanship Dr Kirk saw much more clearly than anyone else what were the essential objectives of the Council, and it is mainly due to his knowledge, wisdom, clarity of mind, meticulous care for detail and unflagging energy, that they have been so nearly attained in the sixteen years of his Chairmanship.

1. He envisaged the primary work of the Council to be the integration of the Religious Life in the Church of England, and we believe it to be true that an essential unity is now being attained by the Communities which, owing to the circumstances of their various foundations, hardly existed twenty years ago.

2. There was laid upon the Council the establishment of orderly relations between the Communities and the Episcopate, and we believe that the marked increase in sympathy and understanding on both sides, as well as the willingness to accept godly discipline on the part of the Communities which is noticeable today, is very largely the result of Dr Kirk's wisdom and personal contacts with Bishops and Superiors.

3. The examination of large numbers of Constitutions made it clear that a fundamental clarification of the principles of administration of the Religious Life was a pressing need, and the work was undertaken which resulted in the publication of the *Directory of the Religious Life* in 1943. That work owes more, both in form and content, to Dr Kirk than can be expressed. He was tireless in revision of successive drafts and no detail was too small for his consideration, while his learning and administrative acumen are visible in every chapter.

4. In 1938 the Council had not found itself, and its precise position was hardly clear to itself or the Communities, still less to the Church at large. It is hardly too much to say that the stability and authority it has since attained are due to the far-sighted vision and practical wisdom of Dr Kirk.



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## INTRODUCTION

*The Revival.* On Trinity Sunday 1841 Marian Rebecca Hughes entered formally upon a life of consecration to God by taking the three Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. She thus entered the Religious State, so far as that is possible without the support and obligations of Community life. It was some time before any stable Community was established, but once that had happened a rapid development took place, and within the next few years more than twenty Anglican Communities were founded, of which the greater number flourished and have now a large membership. These Communities (together with many others founded since) are responsible for work of great importance, educational, missionary, penitentiary, and so forth. They were initiated and organized by the genius, learning and spirituality of such men as Dr Pusey, Dr Neale, Dean Butler, Canon Carter, and Father Benson. They were spiritual ventures called into being by the Holy Spirit and undertaken by men and women endowed with special gifts. The work was carried out under the conditions created by the re-awakened sense of the essential Catholicism of the English Church.

These early ventures were for the most part private and self-contained; they were unsupported by ecclesiastical authority, often gravely suspect, and embarrassed by discouragement or opposition. But as they grew in numbers and gained importance through their activities, ecclesiastical authority began to extend its favour, and individual Bishops showed their sympathy and gave such official support as might be accorded by the acceptance of the office of Visitor, or by the licensing of Chaplains.

The growth was from the beginning that of the true Religious Life; it assumed various forms, but in each case the state that was entered was one of voluntary and complete self-consecration to God. Whether the Community followed an active, contemplative, or mixed life, it always envisaged the personal sanctification of its members by perpetual separation from the world under the obligation of the Vows of Religion. In the formation and regulation of the various Communities the founders and first members looked to the long tradition and experience of the Western Church

for guidance, but they did so in a spirit not of meticulous imitation, but of adaptation.

*Development.* As the spirit of Catholicism, revived by the Oxford Movement, spread in the Church at large, the suspicion with which the Religious Life had been regarded was gradually allayed. The spiritual value of the various activities to which the Communities had devoted themselves served increasingly to commend the mode of life of which the activities were the expression. The first fifty years of the new order may be regarded as a period of adventure and experiment, of development and consolidation. A few Communities unfortunately succumbed, but the majority survived, and some of the larger ones established themselves in India and Africa, as also in America, where an indigenous growth had already sprung to life. One common feature is, however, to be observed: with the exception of a single Benedictine House, founded at Feltham in 1868 and subsequently transferred to Malling Abbey and later to Milford Haven, all the Communities of this period devoted themselves in a greater or less degree to some form of active ministry, though all alike derived their inspiration and their strength, as has been said, from the fundamental consecration of life to God under the three Vows of Religion.

By the end of the nineteenth century the experience and the endurance of the Religious Communities already established opened the way for new developments, to satisfy fresh spiritual aspirations and to supply the ever-growing needs of the Church in her effort to meet the changing social and economic conditions of the time. These developments took different forms: in one direction there was a revival of the monastic and claustral ideal of contemplation, liturgical worship, and penance; in the other, Communities were founded whose aim was to maintain the common life by strict adherence to discipline and by fidelity to spiritual rule and constitutional government, with life intention but without Vows.<sup>1</sup>

The recognition of the three types thus indicated will help to

<sup>1</sup> It may be of interest to note that, in the brief history of the English Revival, the creation and growth of Communities of men called to a life of devotion, discipline, and service, though without the special obligation of life-long consecration under Religious Vows, was in fact a counterpart of that which had taken place in the main body of the Western Church, where, since the seventeenth century, similar Communities, both of priests and laymen, have come into being.



the better understanding of this Directory, which, however, is mainly concerned with the Religious State as created by Vows. But one point must be recognized as applicable to all, namely, that each Community represents a family within the whole fellowship of the Church. Each such family is a complete unit, having its own spiritual ideals, its own internal government, and its own Rule of Life so framed as to lead all the members to the realization of the common ideal and to the Christian perfection of life which complete self-consecration to God demands.

*Recognition by Ecclesiastical Authority.* It was not until the close of these first fifty years of growth and stabilization that any general recognition of Religious and Community Life was accorded by ecclesiastical authority. At the Lambeth Conference of 1897 the subject of Religious Communities was raised and considered by a committee of the Conference in a spirit of sympathetic appreciation, with express thanksgiving to God for "the manifold tokens of His blessing upon the revival of Religious Communities in our branch of the Catholic Church". In its report the committee expressed its desire to secure to Communities the duly regulated freedom that is essential to their life, and alluded to four essential points: (1) Vows; (2) the position of priests religious and of priests ministering to Religious; (3) Episcopal visitation; (4) property. In view of the importance of the subject, the Conference requested the committee to continue its investigations and submit a further report to the Archbishop of Canterbury the next year. After full consideration and consultation with the heads of the more important Communities, a report dealing rather more definitely with the points enumerated above was presented to the Archbishop on 28 November 1898, and circulated by him to the English Episcopate in 1902. It was further submitted to the Lambeth Conference of 1908, which requested that a copy be transmitted to every Bishop of the Anglican Communion for consideration.

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 did not include the subject of Religious Communities in its agenda, but the committee dealing with "the position of women in the councils and ministrations of the Church" referred appreciatively to "the notable services rendered to the Church and to the world by Religious Communities of women". It suggested that close relations should be established between diocesan Bishops and the Communities situated within their respective jurisdictions and that central



advisory bodies should be created, containing ample representation of the Communities themselves, which would promote co-ordination and mutual communication between the several Communities. This committee was concerned only with the efficiency of the service rendered by the Communities; its suggestions had no bearing on their internal well-being or stability, nor on their relations with the Church as a whole or the Episcopate in particular. But its references to the subject have interest as an indication of the growing appreciation of the spiritual value of the contribution made by Religious Communities to the life of the Church.

With the approach of the Lambeth Conference of 1930 the consideration of Religious Communities, in the widest sense, was resumed. As a first step a scheme of Regulations was drafted by which the relations between the Communities and the Episcopate should be ordered. Opportunity was offered to the Communities to consider the proposed Regulations, and a meeting of Superiors and other representatives numbering nearly a hundred was held at Keble College, Oxford, on 9 January 1930. Naturally enough, the practical experience of many who had for years been in positions of responsibility in the Religious State yielded a considerable amount of criticism and suggestion. The most important contribution to the latter was a unanimous request for the constitution of a Council to act as intermediary between the Episcopate and the Communities. The meeting also appointed a committee of its members to discuss the proposals with the Bishops, and shortly afterwards a committee of Bishops was appointed to confer with the Communities' representatives. The meetings of this joint committee resulted in a certain modification of the Regulations mentioned above.

Later in the year the Lambeth Conference was held. The report of the committee dealing with Religious Communities was noteworthy, among other things, for its recognition, not only of the existence but also of the value of different types of Religious Life, with explicit reference to the distinction between the active and contemplative modes. It presented the outline of a scheme for establishing formal relations between the Episcopate and the Communities, and further suggested that the Church should "bring before Church people the fact that God may be calling many of varying attainments and gifts to consecrate themselves to His service in a corporate life of dedication". The report concluded



with a recommendation that an Advisory Council should be established to deal with technical matters and to encourage incipient Communities.

After the Lambeth Conference the joint committee of Bishops and representatives of the Communities was reconstituted to consider the whole question. These consultations resulted in a further modification of the Regulations. A more important consequence, however, followed in July 1931, in the shape of a memorandum upon the formation of the proposed Advisory Council to serve the needs of the Provinces of Canterbury and York. The importance of this development is attested by the debate upon the subject in the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation, during which one of the principal speakers described the proposal for a Council as one of the most important matters that had come before the House for many years.

*The Advisory Council.* The Advisory Council was duly appointed in 1935, after the proposal had been laid before the Lower Houses of Convocation in January 1934.

The Constitution of the Council provides that the Chairman and Convener shall be a diocesan Bishop appointed by the Metropolitans of Canterbury and York. The body of the Council consists of six priests elected by the Communities, together with six members appointed by the Bishops, being "expert in questions connected with Community life". Its functions are: (1) to advise the Bishops upon (a) questions arising about the charters and Rules of existing Communities, (b) the establishment of new Communities, (c) matters referred to it by a diocesan Bishop, especially in regard to the Regulations, (d) any amendment that may seem to the Council to be desirable in the said Regulations; (2) to advise existing Communities with a view to their obtaining enrolment in accordance with the Regulations, or in other matters if they so desire; (3) to give guidance to those who wish to form Communities; (4) to certify to the Bishops as to Communities which have a Rule consonant with the Regulations<sup>1</sup> with a view to their being enrolled at Lambeth.

Thus the project first put forward by the representatives of the Communities in their conference at Oxford in January 1930 came to its realization. The intervening time had not been by any means

<sup>1</sup> These Regulations, drawn up in 1937, are in many respects out of date, and are being revised.

wasted; conferences of Community representatives on the one part, discussions in the joint committee of Bishops and representatives of the Communities on the other, together with debates in the Convocations, had done much to clarify the main issues and to promote closer understanding between the various interests concerned.

The Advisory Council, thus sponsored and duly constituted, held its first meeting at the Church House, Westminster, on 21 November 1935. Among its earlier acts was the cordial adoption of a proposal which originated at a conference of representatives of Communities held at Kilburn in the previous July. In virtue of this, the six members of the Council who had been elected by the Communities were authorized to act as a Standing Committee to deal with such internal affairs of Communities as might be submitted to the Council but did not come directly within the terms of reference of the whole body. The proposal when first formulated at the conference had been welcomed as providing a body qualified by technical knowledge and experience to watch over the interests of the specifically Religious State.

From that time onwards the Council has held its meetings regularly, and applications for advice have been received and dealt with from Bishops, from the heads of Communities, and from others.

*The Directory.* The nature of the work on which the Council found itself engaged led to the suggestion, made early in 1939, that it was desirable to prepare a glossary of technical terms for the use of those concerned with the formation and administration of Communities. A Committee was formed to take the work in hand, but in doing so, came to the conclusion that a mere glossary would serve no practical purpose, and that something more comprehensive was needed to secure the essential values of the Religious Life within the distinctive system of the Church of England. The result was this Directory, published in 1943. The present revision has been in hand since 1950.

It must be recognized that such constructive suggestions as are here presented can only be regarded as advisory. They cannot supersede any Constitutions by which existing Communities are bound, nor are they intended to do so. But it is hoped that they may have value in the formation of new Communities, and may also be of practical use where Constitutions which have proved



ineffective, or may require revision or expansion, are to be amended. In the meantime, supported by the authority under which they are issued, they may serve to bring about a clearer understanding of the conditions and requirements of that way of life which, in its many diverse forms, is proving itself to be a source of spiritual energy in the whole life of the Church.

The Directory has included within its scope those Communities whose members have been accepted with life intention though not under the obligation of Vows; but not such Societies as the well-known Bush Brotherhoods of Australia, whose membership is only temporary, nor any Society of secular priests, formed to meet the pressing needs of home missions.

## THE RELIGIOUS STATE

1. The *Religious State* is attained by the voluntary undertaking of certain obligations, sealed by Vows, Perpetual or Temporary. Usually the Vows relate to three obligations of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience (but cf. *Benedictinism*, p. 44). The Vows are made to God, but they are formally witnessed and received by a Bishop or Priest (under conditions laid down in the Statutes of the Community to whose guardianship and maintenance the individual thereby commits himself), as well as by the Community itself (*vide* 21 and 25).

2. (a) A *Religious Community* is an association of persons who have undertaken in common the above-mentioned obligations, have subscribed to certain governing ordinances, and have voluntarily pledged themselves to observe a common *Rule of Life* (*vide* 44 (b)). Within this association there are, of course, mutual obligations between the Community as such and the individuals of whom it is composed.

(b) *Other Religious Associations*. Communities of persons who have entered into association for the maintenance of a life of discipline under Rule with a duly constituted government, but without the obligations of Vows (e.g., Bush Brotherhoods), are not technically Religious Communities.

(c) An *Order* is a Religious Community in which Solemn Vows (*vide* 24) are taken. In the Roman Communion the foundation of

new Orders in this strict sense has been forbidden for more than a hundred years.

(d) *Congregation, Institute, Society.* These are Religious Communities in which Simple Vows (*vide* 24), whether Perpetual or Temporary, are taken.<sup>1</sup>

(e) In a different sense the word *Congregation* is sometimes used to denote a branch of the original Community having its own complete organization and government, and limited only as to the completeness of its autonomy by the statutory conditions of its creation.

(f) A *Province* is a local unit within a Community or Congregation. It is created for administrative convenience, but remains in immediate dependence on the central authority which created it. It is governed by a Provincial Superior, and has its own Chapter. The extent and limits of its powers of self-determination are defined by the Statutes of the Community. It has no power to make local adaptations of the Rule or Statutes without the express sanction of the central authority. Any Congregation of a Community may be given power to create Provinces which shall be under its jurisdiction and administration, subject to the statutory regulations of the Community as a whole.

3. *The Modes of the Religious Life.* The Religious Life is commonly classified according to the main intention for which particular Orders or Communities are designed. Three distinct modes are recognized: *Contemplative, Active, and Mixed.*

(a) The *Contemplative Life* has for its essential purpose the worship of God, together with contemplation, and the pursuit of such occupations as may tend to the perfecting of this. Communities manifest various forms of regulated life, designed for the cultivation of their own type of spirituality. They may, for example, differ in the relative emphasis on corporate and private prayer, in the extent to which their Rule permits the undertaking of such works as spiritual ministration and education, and in the degree of insistence upon the exercise of penance in the spirit of reparation. For all alike, enclosure and silence (both observed in varying degrees of strictness) are necessary conditions for their life. For all alike, the aim is the cultivation, through worship and dis-

<sup>1</sup> In popular speech these four terms: Order, Congregation, Institute, Society, are sometimes used loosely; and the generic title used by a Community does not necessarily denote its character.



cipline, of a life of union with God for the enriching of the Body of Christ.

(b) The *Active Life* is devoted to various works of mercy (e.g., education, the care of the sick, the reclamation of penitents, missions, parochial work) inspired by regulated spiritual exercises.

(c) The *Mixed Life* is less susceptible of exact definition, because in its exercise it demands qualities belonging both to the contemplative and active modes. The mere use in the Active Life of exercises appropriate to the Contemplative (e.g., the recitation of the Divine Office, or daily meditation) does not constitute the mixed life. The spirit and ethos of the Contemplative Life must be there to provide a reservoir from which the channels of activity draw their supply. For this mode, a Community must express and inculcate in its Rule, and maintain in its teaching and tradition, the spiritual quality of the Contemplative Life, in order that the distinctive energy of that life may overflow in such activities as are compatible with the maintenance of the contemplative spirit.

## THE RELIGIOUS PERSON

4. A *Religious Person* (commonly called a "Religious") is one who has been formally admitted to the Religious State. Before such admission, a candidate must pass through the Postulancy and the Novitiate. A Professed Religious is therefore one who, having fulfilled the statutory requirements, has bound himself by Vows to God, and has been admitted to membership of a Community, with the rights and privileges of that state (*vide* 25).

5. A *Regular* is, in the widest application of the word in this context, one who lives under an authorized Rule (Lat: *regula*). But in the most recent legislation of the Latin Obedience, it is restricted to members of Monastic Orders, though adjectivally the term is, and always has been, applied to other Religious bodies (e.g., Canons Regular and Clerks Regular). As applied to the clergy, the term distinguishes those who are members of a Religious Community from those who are not.

6. A *Monk* is a member of a Religious Order of men (the term *Order* being used in its strict sense, *vide* 2c) which is specially devoted to the Contemplative Life, and the recitation of the Divine

Office and Liturgy in Choir. A fully professed monk is entitled to the appellation "Dom".

7. A *Nun* is a member of a Religious Order of women. The term is also frequently used of other Enclosed and Contemplative Religious.<sup>1</sup> A fully professed nun is entitled to the appellation of "Dame".

8. A *Friar* is a member of a Religious Community of men, specially devoted to mission preaching and to a strict observance of corporate poverty, according to the spirit of either the Franciscan, Dominican, or Carmelite Rule.

9. A *Brother* is a lay member of a Religious Community of men; the term is also used in Communities of Friars indifferently for priests and laymen.

10. A *Sister* is a member of a Community, Congregation, Institute, or Society of women.

## THE RELIGIOUS FAMILY

11. *Choir and Lay Members.* In men's Communities this distinction is normally between priests and those preparing for the priesthood on the one hand, and laymen on the other. In women's Communities the discrimination is normally between those who undertake the full task of the *Opus Dei* and those who, through lack of health or of education, or by special vocation, do not undertake responsibility for reciting the full Office. The distinction is therefore primarily one of function, from which one of status may follow.

Historically the distinction dates from about the eleventh century, from which time onwards it has continued and developed, and is now of common usage. It is not, as is generally supposed, of social, but of strictly religious significance. In a society which lives its life as a more or less self-contained unit, it is inevitable that, while all are united by a common spiritual ideal and active purpose, there should be differences in natural and acquired aptitude for

<sup>1</sup> The term Monk and Nun are not general terms for all Religious, and their indiscriminate use in the present day is greatly to be deprecated. Similarly, Religious is not a general term for all who happen to be living a common life under Rule.



the main exercises of the common life. Since worship is a primary purpose of the Religious Life, it is reasonable that a discrimination should be made between those who are qualified to undertake full responsibility for the complete and perfect performance of liturgical worship (as well as for the theological and other study necessary for preaching, educational work, etc.) and those, who while sharing in the *Opus Dei* according to their capacity, are better qualified for the more physically active duties which are also necessary.

In Communities in which this distinction obtains, it is from the Choir members that the Superior is chosen, and they alone usually possess full capitular rights (*vide* 12), which may, however, be granted to lay members either in full, or with certain restrictions.

12. *Capitular and Non-capitular Members.* This distinction may be found in such Enclosed Communities as insist upon the common obligation of manual work on equal terms by all members as an essential characteristic of the life. The full exercise of the rights of government in Chapter are entrusted to the Capitular members, the Non-capitular members possessing restricted rights; the Capitular member is generally bound to recite the whole Divine Office, whether present in Choir or not, the Non-capitular being either wholly or partially exempt from this duty when absent from Choir.

13. *Solemnly or Simply Professed.* In Communities which administer Solemn Vows (*vide* 24), there may be a distinction between those who have taken Solemn Vows and those who have taken Perpetual Vows, whose obligations of Office and of enclosure are less strict and whose capitular rights may be restricted.

14. *Ordained Religious.*

(a) *Ordination of Religious.* Ordinands who are members of recognized Religious Communities are not subject to the regulations of the Central Advisory Council of Training for the Ministry requiring ordinands to present themselves at Selection Boards, provided that their ordination does not take place before they are in Life Vows. They will instead present themselves before a Board appointed for the purpose by the Chairman of the Advisory Council for Religious Communities. Should such an ordinand leave his Community without taking Life Vows, he will thereupon become subject to the above-mentioned regulations. In

exceptional cases, applications may be made for the ordination of Religious in Temporary Vows.

All such ordinands are subject to the usual regulations with regard to examination.

(b) *External work of Ordained Religious.* Religious, who are priests and who are assigned by their Community to parochial or other similar work, are for the time they are engaged in such work subject to the same episcopal jurisdiction and canonical obligations as the secular clergy.

15. *External work of Lay Religious.* Religious, both male and female, who are assigned to assist in parochial work are for the time being under the jurisdiction of the parish priest in all matters relating to that work, due regard being paid to any conditions which may be laid upon them by their Community with the assent of those who ask for their help. Schools, hospitals, and other similar institutions maintained by Religious are under the jurisdiction of the priest in whose parish they are situated, save where exemption has been granted by the Bishop in accordance with the Private Chapels Act, 1871.

16. *Branch Houses.* A Branch House is a domicile occupied and controlled by members of a Community, who are assigned to it by their Superior for such time as he thinks fit. Branch Houses may differ considerably as to numbers and importance. They will be presided over by a Father or Sister Superior or a Father-in-Charge or Sister-in-Charge as circumstances require. The members of a House are bound to the normal observance of the Rule, and are governed by the Statutes, equally with other members of the Community.

Should the circumstances of the House demand some dispensation from the Rule, which has not been provided for in the Statutes, the Superior of the Community must obtain such dispensation from the Visitor. The Visitor has the right to visit any Branch House of the Community in any diocese, unless such House, being situated outside the British Isles, has its own Visitor duly appointed in accordance with the Constitution of the Community. The help of the Visitor may be asked when permission has to be obtained from the Bishop of the diocese for the maintenance of the customs and liturgical usage of the Mother House (*vide* 32 (a)).



17. *Personal Property.* The Novice, as also the Religious in *Temporary Vows*, retains legal possession of his property, which, however, he administers only with the permission of his Superior. He may be required to pay for his maintenance, but may not alienate any property without express permission, nor make over any of it to the Community.

On *Profession in Perpetual Vows*, the Religious will, so far as possible, renounce all earthly possessions, so disposing of his property as to be no longer possessed thereof. In doing this, it is proper that he should bear in mind the needs of his natural family as well as of his Religious Community. No constraint may be put upon him to endow the Community beyond the extent of the dowry<sup>1</sup> (if any) required by the Statutes. As regards the disposal of his property over and above this amount he remains a free agent; equally, there is no constraint upon the Community to accept any endowment or benefaction. Careful provision should be made concerning legacies, stipends, and any other monies receivable by members of a Community. The Community should also, where necessary, provide for the management of estates in which any of its members may possess a life interest, and due regard should be paid, not only to the interests of a Community in such an estate, but also to that of the reversionary owners.

In some Communities, the Religious continue to hold personal property in their own names, even after Profession in Perpetual Vows. In such cases, the Religious must, before final Profession, make a Will, divesting himself, so far as may be possible, of all liability for the administration of his property, and making all necessary provisions for his family and Community. The Statutes of such Communities should state what authority determines the amount of the dowry, and by what provisions the use of the remainder of the income of the Religious is to be governed. The Will once made, no alteration may normally be made therein. It may, however, happen that some alteration may legitimately be sought after Profession, e.g., the Religious might have settled an income upon his mother, but upon her death, or a change in her circumstances, he might wish to alter that arrangement; such alterations may be permitted by the Superior or his Council, with reference if necessary to the Visitor.

<sup>1</sup> *Dowry*: a contribution to the common fund of the Community made at Profession.

All income from whatever sources which the Religious receives from his life and work as a Religious (e.g., stipends, royalties, donations for the furtherance of the objects of his Community) is the property of the Community, and is not at his own disposal. If such income is liable to continue after his death (e.g., royalties from books), he must by Will bequeath it to the Community, unless the Superior decides otherwise. Should he, however, receive gifts for specific objects with regard to the work to which he is appointed (e.g., donations to a Religious serving as a Chaplain to the Forces for comforts for his men) he is not accountable to his Community for such gifts. Nevertheless, a Religious should not undertake to collect money for such objects without the consent and permission of his Superiors. In no case may a Religious retain any personal gift for his own use without the permission of his Superiors.

## ADMISSION TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE

18. *Postulancy.* A *Postulant* is a person who, having been accepted for probation, has been received into the Convent or House of a Community, and has formally entered upon the preliminary course of discipline and training that is required before the admission to the Novitiate. The limit of the period of Postulancy should be stated in the Constitution.

### 19. *Novitiate.*

(a) A *Novice* is a probationary member of a Community, who having given adequate signs of a definite purpose to give himself to God therein, has been admitted to training in its life and discipline, and given the Habit in a modified form.

(b) *Clothing.* Admission is accorded by the Superior, under such conditions as the Statutes of the Community may require. It is granted by the formal bestowal of the Habit, hence the term "Clothing" for the Office of Admission.

(c) *Duration.* The duration of the Novitiate should be clearly laid down by the Statutes; universal custom prescribes that it be not less than one whole year from the reception of the Habit. The Novice, during this period, should be resident in the Novitiate House of the Community, but if the Novitiate be longer than one



year, the Statutes may provide for temporary residence in some other house of the Community, after the completion of a full year at the Novitiate House. If the Novitiate lasts for a year only, absence for a total of one month only invalidates the Novitiate, which then has to be recommenced. The period of the Novitiate may be extended for six months, or such other period as is prescribed in the Statutes, but it is gravely irregular for a Novitiate to be extended beyond this period.

(d) *Rights.* The Novice, as a probationary member, has no right to any share in the government or administration of the Community, but is strictly *in statu pupillari*.

(e) The degree of intercourse permitted between the Novices and the Professed Religious varies in different Communities. In some, the Novitiate quarters are separate, and intercourse between the Novices and the Professed Religious is strictly limited: in others a greater freedom prevails. But in any case the Professed Religious must abstain from interference with matters which are within the jurisdiction of the Novice Master. The character and capacities of Novices should not be a matter of ordinary conversation. Where there seems to be serious cause for correction, the matter will be brought to the notice of the Novice Master, who will in all necessary cases report to the Superior.

The responsibility of putting forward Novices for election to Profession is normally shared by the Superior and the Novice Master.

(f) *Termination.* The Novitiate may be terminated by the Community at any time in accordance with the provisions of its Statutes; the Novice also has the right to retire at any time from the Novitiate, and may not be detained by the Community against his own will or judgement. With dismissal or retirement all obligations created on either side by admission to the Novitiate are abrogated.

## PROFESSION

20. *Religious Profession* is the external act by which a person binds his life to God by the Vows of Religion, after due probation and training, and acceptance by the Community.

21. (a) A *Vow* in its scriptural sense is any solemn promise made to God. It may: (1) have for its object the performance of

some particular good work, or may (2) be the condition of entry upon a new mode of life (e.g., the vows of Baptism or of Marriage). The obligation is binding upon the conscience until either the vow is discharged by its fulfilment, or a dispensation (or commutation) is granted by a competent spiritual authority. No person has power to dispense himself from the performance of the vows he has made.

(b) *Vows of Religion* belong to the second category. They carry the obligation of a life of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience under a Superior and a Rule approved by ecclesiastical authority. The Vows are distinguished as *Temporary* and *Perpetual*.

22. (a) *Temporary Vows* are those taken with a specified time limit. Their obligations are binding with full effect until the time of their duration shall have expired, unless they are previously dispensed. When the limit is reached the life automatically reverts to the Secular State, unless the obligation be formally renewed for a further period. It is customary to make some distinction in the Habit of those under Temporary Vows.

(b) *Statutes of Temporary Vows*. When in any Community a period of Temporary Vows is interposed between the completion of the Novitiate and admission to Perpetual Vows, definite legislation is required in the Statutes upon the following points:

(i) The authority by whom permission to take such Vows is granted.

(ii) The period for which the Vows are taken (which must be specified in the Act of Profession) and the conditions of renewal.

(iii) The rights and privileges accorded by admission to Temporary Vows.

(iv) The terms of dispensation from such vows during the time of their obligation.

(v) The length of time, both minimum and maximum, during which continuance in such Temporary Vows is permitted. General experience and justice to the persons involved require that the period should not be extended beyond six years, unless age demands it; normally, it should be less, though not less than three (cf. *Benedictinism*, p. 44).

(vi) The authority by whom permission to take Perpetual Vows is granted.



23. *Perpetual Vows* are those that are administered and taken with the intention of a life-long obligation, even though the Statutes of a particular Community may contain provision for the remission of the obligation in exceptional circumstances.

24. *Solemn and Simple Vows.* This distinction is not, as is often supposed, the same as that between *Perpetual* and *Temporary Vows*, the latter being purely durational and the former qualitative. No formula for distinguishing between Solemn and Simple Vows has been generally accepted, and in any case, the distinction has little application in the present circumstances of the Church of England, since the Benedictine Communities alone have any long-standing claim to regard their Vows as Solemn, all other Vows being technically Simple. There are, however, many Communities of proved stability whose members regard their Vows as being final beyond any ordinary dispensation, though they would accept the supreme dispensing authority vested in the See of Canterbury as competent to deal with cases of proved necessity. Such Vows are to some extent analogous to the Solemn Vows of tradition.

25. (a) *Consequences of Religious Profession.* By a Solemn or Simple Profession, the Religious delivers his life to God, while the Community to whose government and maintenance he thereby commits himself (*vide* 1) admits him to its membership according to the provision of its Constitution, at the same time undertaking full responsibility for his life. Besides its binding force upon the Religious towards God, it therefore also involves a contract of mutual obligation between him and his Community.

(b) *Permanence of the Obligation to God.* Since the central act in Profession is the binding of the life to God by the Vows of Religion, its effect (subject to any provisions that may be stated in the formula of Profession or in the Statutes of the Community) is that the obligation to God created by the Vows will remain, even should the contract between the individual and the Community be formally abrogated.

(c) *Formula.* The Formula of Profession should be set forth in the Statutes and should therefore remain unaltered, except by the procedure appointed to effect changes in the Statutes. This is necessary in order that the terms of the surrender of the life to God, and those of mutual obligation between each person and the Community, may be uniform for all cases.



26. *Incipient Communities.*

(a) A Religious Community can exist only as a part of the living Church, and as subject to her order and discipline. In the case of incipient Communities, not only are its members individually subject to ecclesiastical order and discipline, but also the Community itself, as it develops, must inevitably seek recognition by ecclesiastical authority. Formally complete recognition should not be given at once, as it must proceed step by step with the development of the Community. Indeed, after the project has been brought to the notice of the Diocesan, a considerable period must elapse before the incipient Community can reach the stage at which it may rightly seek full Religious status.

(b) The initiation of a new Community can be justified only where there is a conception, distinct from that of Communities already existing, of the nature of the life of sacrifice and service, with its underlying aim and motive, which is to be offered to God.

(c) Where there are three or more persons thus minded, they should arrange to live a common life, in some measure of seclusion under a simple Rule, in order to test their capacity for mutual self-subordination, and to clarify their aim. In the case of a Lay Community it will be necessary to secure the assistance of a priest who is sympathetic to the venture, and can act for the Community in its relations with ecclesiastical authority. During this period, which should last at least two years, there will be opportunity for the development of the Rule and of the manner of life. A new stage will be reached when it is found possible to formulate a Religious Rule, together with the outlines of a Constitution, in which the distinctive spirituality of the Community would be more clearly expressed, especially in reference to the requirements of the Vows. Such a formulation, on account of its technical character, should be submitted to the scrutiny of the Advisory Council.

(d) When this Rule and Constitution has received the approval of the Advisory Council, and the Community has lived under it for at least six months, the priest who is acting for the Community shall approach the Diocesan with a request for general approval. This having been granted, a Novitiate may be formed, and a Habit given.

In the case where the priest who is fostering the growth of the Community is not himself an experienced Religious, or possessed



of expert knowledge of the technicalities of the Religious State, it would be of great advantage both to the Community and to the Bishop if this priest were required to keep in close touch with the Advisory Council.

(e) It should be understood that during this period, neither the Constitution nor the Rule of Life can be complete in all their details, yet it is very important that their essential characteristics should be clearly shown to all, and be in practical observance. The consent of the Priest Adviser shall at this stage be sufficient for amendments or additions to the Rule or Constitution.

(f) The duration of the Novitiate at this stage need not be determined but it may be suggested that a period of two years would be suitable, after which the Priest Adviser may, with the approbation of the Council, recommend to the Diocesan that the Community be permitted to proceed to the election of a Visitor, who would give the necessary authorization for the admission to Annual Vows to such as were suitable.

(g) Since the Visitor, whether he be Diocesan or not, is officially the guardian of the Community, and also its guarantor to the Church, before accepting office he would need to be satisfied that the Rule and Constitution were adequate and in order; and that the Community intended to conform to ordinary ecclesiastical discipline. For the former purpose the help of the Advisory Council should be sought.

(h) Those living under Temporary Vows should renew them annually for at least three years, and if necessary for a further period, until there are at least seven members who shall have completed the three years of Temporary Vows. After that, application may be made to the Diocesan for the administration of Perpetual Vows. When after due inquiry this has been granted, those thus professed would form the first properly constituted Chapter of the Community according to its Statutes. This would not preclude the possibility of some form of Chapter action while the members of the Community were still under Temporary Vows.

It has happened from time to time in the history of the Church that a group of members of a Community have separated themselves from the parent body in order to form an independent Community. The reasons for such action should always be most carefully scrutinized. It is for the Bishop of the Diocese in which the new Community proposes to settle to do this, in consultation with

the Diocesan, the Visitor of the parent Community, and the Advisory Council. If the Bishop is satisfied that the separation is made for good reasons, some time should elapse, during which the Community should not be allowed to receive Novices, or to admit to Profession, without the express permission of the Bishop. This period would naturally end when the Diocesan, or a Bishop approved by him, becomes the official Visitor of the Community.

## RELEASE

27. (a) *New Definition.* Release is used in this Directory in one sense only, viz., to mean the separation of the individual from his Community. It may be either:

- (i) Temporary, by Exclaustration, or
- (ii) Permanent, by Transference, Dismissal, or Secularization.

(b) *Old Definition.* In the Constitutions of some Communities the word is used as a technical term to denote a permanent release from the obligations of residence, common life, and observance, while the Vows and the Religious State are retained.<sup>1</sup> It has, however, been found undesirable in practice that there should be any state intermediate between temporary Exclaustration and permanent Secularization as defined below, and therefore the use of the word "Release" in this sense is to be deprecated.

28. (a) *Exclaustration* is a permission granted to a Professed Religious to live outside any convent or house of his Community for a given period, not exceeding three years, after which time he must either return to his community or ask for Secularization (*vide* 31). During the period of Exclaustration he is not subject to the authority of his Superior<sup>2</sup> though he retains the right to return to the same place in the Community he occupied before his Exclaustration.

Such permission must be first considered by the same authority in the Community as that which admits its members to Life Vows.

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of this Directory this word was used in this sense.

<sup>2</sup> Exclaustration thus differs from *Leave of Absence*, which may be given for temporary residence outside the monastery or convent for some specific reason, the Religious remaining subject to the authority of his Superior, and retaining his Chapter rights throughout the period.



If consent is given, the Visitor shall be asked to ratify that decision by pronouncing a decree of Exclaustration for the period assigned. In cases where the Community declines to support the application a Religious has a right of appeal to the Visitor against this decision. Respect for the rights of the Community over its own members would suggest that such an appeal should be referred to the opinion of the Advisory Council. After consideration of this advice the Visitor may, if he thinks fit, execute a decree of Exclaustration.

Recourse may be had to Exclaustration in cases of:

- (i) Counter-claims, such as a call to some special service in the Church, or urgent family reasons and need;
- (ii) Temporary nervous or mental derangement;
- (iii) Some other cogent reason which is approved by the authorities of the Community.

The initiative in Exclaustration may come as an application from the Religious himself, or on the suggestion of the Community as a means of relieving the burden of obligations while retaining the support of spiritual fellowship and the guardianship of the Vows.

(b) *Terms of Exclaustration.* During the period of Exclaustration, the Religious remains bound by the obligation of his Vows, and by such other obligations of his state as are compatible with the condition of life allowed him during this period. Dispensation may, however, be granted from any or all of the particular forms of discipline prescribed by the Rule of the Community, and he may be required not to wear the Habit (though in such a case the Community must provide other suitable clothing). During the period of Exclaustration, the Religious has no right to any voice in the government of the Community, and is subject to the Ordinary of the place in which he resides.

(c) *Return.* On his return, either when the period of Exclaustration is ended or upon his own application, the Religious resumes his former place, status, and privileges in the Community unaltered, together with any obligations, including the wearing of the Habit, which may have been temporarily relaxed.

## 29. *Transference.*

(a) A Religious may, in response to a distinct Vocation to a more austere mode of life, or in view of some grave necessity, recognized as valid by the authorities of his Community, be transferred from

one Community to another. The process involves, on the one hand, a severance of his connection with the Community of his Profession, renunciation of his rights therein, and release from all obligations thereto created by his Profession; and, on the other hand, his admission after due probation to full membership in another Community. It is usually held that Transference is justifiable only when the transition is to a Community of stricter Observance (e.g., from the Active to the Contemplative Life); in rare cases, however, it may be granted in other circumstances. But it cannot rightly be used without the *ex animo* consent of the Religious himself nor as a remedy for ordinary cases of incompatibility, which generally arise from the failure of the individual to accept the necessary discipline of the Religious Life.

(b) Subject to any statutory conditions of either of the two Communities concerned which bear upon such a transaction, the principles of justice and religious order demand that the following requirements be observed:

(i) No Community may accept a member of any other Community without such probation in its Novitiate as is required in its own Constitution for ordinary admission, though as a general rule, no period of postulancy is required.

(ii) In principle the Religious who is in process of transference retains membership of his first Community until he is professed in his second, hence the express sanction of the Superior of the Community from which Transference is sought is necessary, to cover the whole period of absence, until the term of probation is completed, or the purpose of Transference abandoned. During the period of probation all rights and obligations belonging peculiarly to membership in the original Community are in abeyance, the corresponding obligations of the recipient Community being in force, including the wearing of its normal Novitiate Habit.

(iii) If at the end of the Novitiate the probation has proved satisfactory and Transference is decided upon, the necessary release from the original Community is granted in accordance with the Statutes of the Community.

(iv) The recipient Community admits the Religious to membership through the body or person by whom normal admission for Profession is accorded, and the Religious shall



renew his Life Profession in accordance with the normal form of the Community. In such cases, Temporary Vows are not required.

(v) In all cases the consent of the respective Visitors of the two Communities is necessary.

(vi) Since the Vows of the Religious concerned are of life-long obligation, Transference can be made only to a Community of sufficient stability to provide life-long observance. It will therefore be part of the responsibility of the Visitor of the Community from which the Transference is to be made to satisfy himself that the recipient Community is sufficiently established and provided with an adequate Constitution, and is generally able to provide life-long observance.

(vii) If the Transference be not finally determined and approved, the Religious is bound to return to his original Community, which is bound to receive him without prejudice or forfeiture of rights and status.

(viii) Where, owing to lack of members or any other cause, a Community has to break up, there may be little choice for the surviving members between Transference to some other Community or Secularization. Sometimes it may be possible for such a person to find shelter in a Community without being made a member of it, and to wear a Habit provided by that Community.

(ix) Necessity or expediency may on occasion require the introduction of a Religious from another Community to act as Superior. Such a measure may be either temporary or permanent: in either case it must have the consent or both Communities and must be ratified by their Visitors.

If the expedient be only temporary, the transaction will be ruled by the regulations concerning Exclaustration; if permanent, by the Rules for Transference; in neither case will a Novitiate be required. Any details which in a particular case do not appear to be governed by the Statutes of either Community, or by the requirements enumerated above, will be a matter of adjustment between them with the sanction of their Visitors; care being taken to provide that in the event of the recipient Community not attaining stability, the Religious adopted as Superior must return to the Community of his Profession.

30. *Dismissal.*

(a) *Definition.* Dismissal is a penal act by which the Community excludes from membership a professed Religious who has proved contumacious or obdurately incorrigible under disciplinary correction, and has persistently refused to submit when summoned to do so under Holy Obedience, and has been guilty of causing grave public scandal, or of deliberate rejection of the Faith.

(b) *After Apostasy.* Dismissal may also be resorted to in the case of a Religious Apostate, that is, one who in violation of perpetual vows leaves his convent and contumaciously refuses to return when called upon to do so under Holy Obedience.<sup>1</sup> It is the duty of the Community in such a case formally to demand the submission of the Apostate, and to seek his repentance and return by all means in its power. If within a specified time, at least one month, he refuses to return, a sentence of Dismissal should be passed.

(c) *Procedure.* In all cases of Dismissal, the initiative will lie with the Community, and the procedure must be that provided in the Statutes, which must include the condition of ratification by the Visitor. It is the duty of the Visitor, before ratifying the Dismissal, to ensure that the Religious concerned has been given ample opportunity to state his case. He should make every effort to secure the repentance of the Religious concerned.

(d) *Effects.* It is to be noted that Dismissal does not abrogate the Vows of a Religious (cf. 31) except in those cases in which they have been taken conditionally upon the subject's maintaining membership of his Community.

It may be necessary to resort to Secularization after Dismissal either to avoid scandal, or to relieve the dismissed person from a state of sin in this respect, so that penitence may be made easier. Secularization should not, however, be regarded as the necessary consequence of Dismissal. Cases do occur of Religious who have caused great scandal and even apostatized, but yet have not lost their vocation, and, on repentance, have been received back into their Community and become good Religious. To such a recovery Secularization would prove a great hindrance because it would involve submission to the whole process required for admission

<sup>1</sup> An Apostate is therefore distinguished from a Fugitive who has left his convent without permission, but with the intention of returning when the purpose for which he absented himself has been accomplished.



into the Religious State, from Postulancy to final Election. Secularization therefore ought not to take place immediately upon Dismissal; a period of time should be allowed during which every effort should be made to bring the offender to a better frame of mind, his manner of life and use of the Sacraments being regulated by authority.

(e) *Canonical Position of Dismissed Religious.* Such remedial and disciplinary measures as may be necessary will be determined by the Bishop of the diocese in which the offender takes up his residence after Dismissal, and may be administered by a priest appointed by him for the purpose. The Visitor of the dismissing Community should communicate the facts of the case to the Diocesan concerned together with the relevant statement submitted to him by the Community. He should also warn the dismissed person that he has placed himself in such a position that he must await the direction of the Bishop of his place of residence before presenting himself for Absolution or Holy Communion.

(f) *Provision for Support.* The Statutes should explicitly state that no claim for maintenance can be made on the Community by a dismissed Religious, so that the Community may be protected by its Constitution from any legal or financial responsibility towards him. There remains, however, the moral claim for the immediate, and in some cases, the more permanent, needs of the person concerned. Some Constitutions make provision for the return of the dowry, and if this is insufficient, it may on occasion be augmented. In every case the Community must require the return of the Habit by the dismissed Religious, and in the case of a woman, the Ring, and must provide suitable secular clothing.

(g) *Duty of the Community.* While the responsibility of the Community for its subject ceases at Dismissal, it is very desirable that, if possible, some contact should be maintained with him, in view of the possibility of his coming to a better mind. Should a dismissed person subsequently repent and desire to submit himself to his Community, his case should receive most charitable consideration. If re-admission be granted, it should be accompanied by a period of discipline, and by the imposition of disabilities, either temporary or permanent. The Rule of St Benedict has its own provision in this matter.

### 31. *Secularization.*

(a) *Definition.* Secularization is the abrogation of the Religious Vows, which brings about the return of the Religious to the Secular State. This may be an act of mercy to the individual, or a step made necessary by circumstances and imposed by authority. The procedure by which the Vows are abrogated is that of dispensation by a competent authority. Proceedings for Secularization may be initiated by the Community, by the Religious concerned, or by the Bishop under whose jurisdiction the Religious lives, or purposes to live. The voice of all parties concerned should be heard.

(b) *Dispensing Authority.* Since Communities have varying estimates of the dispensability of the Perpetual Vows which they administer, it is necessary that they should incorporate in their Constitutions some definite statement as to what final dispensing authority they are prepared to accept and recognize. In the Church of England, both by ancient prescription and by Statute Law (cf. 25 Henry VIII, cap. 21) the highest available dispensing power rests with the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is suggested that, where the Constitution contains no definite statement on the subject, the authority of the Archbishop should be recognized; that where a Religious asks for the exercise of this authority, he should do so through the diocesan Bishop in whose diocese he lives, or proposes to live; and that the Bishop, before forwarding such application to the Archbishop, should consult with the authorities of the Community concerned, and with the Advisory Council.

(c) *Secularization of a Religious from another Province.* It sometimes occurs that a dismissed or apostate Religious migrates to another Province without having obtained dispensation from the Vows taken to God. In such cases the following principles should be applied:

(i) Decision should be taken as to whether the Religious Person should be secularized, or (as occasionally happens) should be put under special discipline or direction for the continued observance of the Vows (see below, iv).

(ii) Where Secularization seems advisable, the dispensing authority is that of the Province in which the Religious now resides, or proposes to reside, not that of the Province in which



the Mother House of the Community is situated, if the two Provinces are different.

(iii) If the process of Secularization is initiated by the Community, it should forward a statement of the case through the Visitor to the Bishop of the diocese in which the Religious resides, or proposes to reside. If the diocesan Bishop, after review, deems the case a suitable one for Secularization, he will transmit the application to the supreme dispensing authority.

(iv) If the process is initiated by the Religious Person or the Bishop of his place of residence, the latter should ask for a full statement of the case from the Community concerned, as well as from the Religious. The application to the Community should go through the Visitor, in order that his opinion also may be secured. With the facts, thus ascertained, before him, the Bishop will decide whether the case is suitable for Secularization, and if so, will transmit it to the supreme dispensing authority.

(d) *Fundamental Unsuitability.* In cases where it seems that the Religious is quite unsuitable for the life, Secularization may be an act of justice, but undue precipitancy should be avoided, since the experience of living in the world might lead the Religious to see that his real remedy was his own conversion, and his return to the Religious Life, either in his former, or another Community.

(e) *Mental or Nervous Disorder.* In cases of mental or nervous disorder, Secularization following Exclaustration may be necessary, but the greatest care and deliberation are needed. To those who are suffering from nervous breakdown it might come as a great relief, but equally there would be some to whom it would cause intense distress and confusion of mind; and in mental cases where recovery is possible, it is obvious that Secularization would entail much hardship if the released person recovered sufficiently to be capable and desirous of return.

## OFFICERS—EXTERNAL

32. *Visitor.*

(a) Religious are subject to the ordinary jurisdiction of the Bishop of the diocese in which they reside. In addition, each Community has a *Visitor*, who must be in Episcopal Orders, and extraneous to the life and membership of the said Community. He is the guardian of the Constitution of the Community, and the guarantor to the Church at large of its sound administration, stability, and right to confidence, and also the normal court of appeal for the maintenance of its discipline. He has for these purposes visitatorial authority also over all the Branch Houses of the Community, unless such Houses, being situated outside the British Isles, have their own Visitor duly appointed in accordance with the Constitution of the Community. He should endeavour, in conjunction with the local diocesan Bishops, to see that, so far as may be, practicable consistency of custom and liturgical usage is maintained in them. To this end, the Diocesan may delegate to the Visitor jurisdiction in liturgical matters.

(b) *Terms of Appointment.* The Visitor should be chosen by the Community, and should be either (i) the Bishop of the diocese in which the Mother House is situated; or (ii) with the consent of the Diocesan, a Bishop of the Province; or (iii) with the sanction of the Diocesan and the Metropolitan, some other Bishop. The Visitor shall hold Office until he vacates it by resignation, or by his voidance of his see, or (where the Visitor is not the Bishop of the diocese, and where he is by age or infirmity incapacitated for the duties of his Office) by the action of the Archbishop of the Province on the recommendation of the Advisory Council.

(c) *Rights and Duties.* Apart from such functions as may be prescribed in the Statutes for the discharge of the above-mentioned obligations, the Visitor has the inherent right to make visitations at his own discretion, in order that he may satisfy himself on all matters of which he is guardian and guarantor. He also has the right and duty of hearing appeals, whether addressed to him by the Chapter for adjudication, or privately submitted in the interest of justice by any professed member of the Community, or by any responsible person external to the Community. The Statutes should make it clear that every professed member of the Com-



munity has the right of unhindered appeal to the Visitor. As distinct from these inherent rights, every body of Statutes must contain provisions regulating the manner of the appointment of the Visitor, and specifying matters or occasions on which his intervention will be required.

(d) *Limits.* Outside these functions, whether inherent or statutory, the Office does not convey any right of intervention or initiative in the affairs of the Community.

### 33. *The Warden or Chaplain General.*

(a) In the development of the Religious Life among women in the nineteenth century, Communities grew under the supervision of priests of eminence, learning, and experience, themselves often the Founders of such Communities, and they and their successors in the office of Warden often exercised a wide measure of control over all the affairs of the Community. Experience has shown the value of this office, in building up the spiritual life of the Community, in safeguarding the observance of the Constitution, and in securing a closer supervision of the Community life than is possible for a diocesan Bishop, or other episcopal Visitor.

(b) *Terms of Appointment.* His relation with other priests, whether Assistants, Chaplains, or Confessors, should be clearly defined by Statute, and there should be explicit provisions regulating: (1) his appointment; (2) the duration of his tenure of office; (3) the possibility of his reappointment; (4) his retirement; (5) the possibility of his removal from office.

(c) *Rights and Duties.* The Statutes should also contain certain definitions of the Warden's rights and duties in regard to such points as the following: the degree of his control over the Chapels and Services of the Community; his responsibility in regard to theological and spiritual books supplied to the Community; his relation to the Superior in such important matters as the presentation for Election of Novices and temporarily Professed; the undertaking and relinquishment of Community works, and the establishment of Branch Houses, or closing of the same; his rights and duties, if any, with regard to meetings of the Chapter, especially as concerns ratification of Elections for Profession; and the rights of members to unhindered access and appeal to him.

34. *A Chaplain* is a priest appointed by the authorities of a Community to perform such functions as the Warden or Chaplain

General may delegate to him, or are assigned to him by the Statutes. The rights and duties of the Chaplain in relation to the Warden, the Community, and persons under the care of the Community should be clearly defined.

35. *Confessors.*

(a) *The Ordinary Confessor.* Each Community must appoint one or more Ordinary Confessors, who shall be the normal ministers of the Sacrament of Penance for each Convent or House.

(b) *The Extraordinary Confessor* is appointed by the same authority to visit the House or Houses of the Community at stated times (usually four times a year), when, in order to avoid the possibility of invidious inference, all the Religious should come to him, if not to make their confession, at least to receive his blessing.

(c) *Rights of Penitents.* Superiors should recognize the right of subjects in cases of real need or distress of conscience to resort to any Confessor of good standing, even though he be not one of those appointed for the Community.

(d) *Qualifications of Confessors.* It is desirable in all these cases that Confessors should be of mature age, experienced in hearing confessions, and well versed in all the obligations and requirements of the Religious State. In no case has the Confessor, as such, any right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of the Community, or to abrogate any part of the Rule.

## OFFICERS—INTERNAL

36. (a) *Superior.* In the widest sense of the word, a *Superior* is one in whom by constitutional appointment authority is vested to administer Religious Obedience to those under his control. The sphere of his authority may be general, local, or departmental, and its character, as well as the mode of his appointment and the duration of his term of office, should be determined by the Statutes of the Community. Various terms are in common usage to denote different spheres or gradations in this constitutional authority.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Franciscan usage the Head of the Community is called the Minister (when he is a priest he is called the Father Minister). The Head of the House is called Guardian, or Father Guardian.



(b) *Superior General* is a title frequently used to denote the person whose authority extends over the whole Community. The actual scope of his authority, administrative or executive, and the limitations of such authority, are defined by the Statutes of the Community.

(c) *Assistant Superior General*. An Assistant Superior General, who may be appointed either by the Superior General or by the Community, as the Statutes may determine, normally acts as the deputy of the Superior General in his absence, or when he is incapacitated for the exercise of government. There may be also allotted to him a special sphere of authority in which he acts as the delegate of the Superior General.

(d) *Provincial Superior*. A Provincial Superior has local authority in his Province, according to the powers laid down by the Statutes of the Community.

(e) *Superiors of Branch Houses*. A more restricted local authority is given to the Superiors of Branch Houses, in any Province of the Community. They are in subordination to the Provincial Superior, and *a fortiori* to the Superior General.

(f) *Novice Master*. It is the duty of the Novice Master to exercise all diligence in the training of the Novices in the Religious Life, to give them regular instruction on the Rule, Statutes, and Customs of the Community, and to observe their behaviour with a view to determining whether there is sufficient evidence that they have received a call from God to the life and work of the Community. To this end he should not be assigned any duties which might impede the fulfilment of his office. The Novice Master is the Superior's deputy in regard to the Novices, and he must therefore act within the bounds laid down by the Statutes, and in obedience to the Superior. In all normal cases, however, he should have reasonable scope in the exercise of this delegated authority.

It is his duty to keep the Superior informed about the affairs and dispositions of the Novices, concerning which he should report regularly to the Superior, and also to the Chapter, where this is demanded by the Statutes or by Custom. The manner of his appointment should be determined by the Statutes.

37. (a) *Obedientiaries*. Obedientiaries are the administrative officials of a Religious House. Their status and functions are defined by the Statutes, and they exercise their authority and can

claim obedience as representatives of the Superior in the sphere entrusted to them. Their authority inasmuch as it is delegated and not absolute (whether the appointment be made by the Chapter or, as is more usual, by the Superior) is subject to the latter's supervision and correction. Their tenure of office, if not otherwise stated and determined by Statute, is at the discretion of the Superior.

(b) *Designations of Obedientiaries* vary in different Communities. The following titles,<sup>1</sup> are, however, in common use: Assistant Superior, Master of Novices, Bursar or Treasurer, Housekeeper, Sacristan, Guestmaster. Prior and Sub-Prior are titles whose exact meaning varies in different Communities.

## CHAPTER GOVERNMENT

38. *The Chapter.* The Chapter in Communities which elect their Superior for a limited term is the central seat of government, the administrative authority being entrusted to the Superior and his subordinate officers. When this is the case, it is through the Chapter that the corporate will of the Community is expressed. The Chapter itself is bound by the Rule and the Constitution, and is guided by the tradition of the Community, and whether or not it includes all the Professed members, it is representative of the whole body. Some functions of the Chapter may be delegated to a Standing Council.

Apart from the provisions of the Constitution, the Superior should make certain, in initiating any important measures the effects of which will operate beyond his term of office, that he is acting with the support of the Chapter. It may sometimes be necessary, through the impossibility of securing adequate attendance at a meeting of the Chapter, for the Superior to seek the expression of opinion of the members by circulating a questionnaire or referendum. It should, however, be borne in mind that the principle of government by Chapter requires the settlement of affairs after corporate deliberation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Such discussion forms or modifies the minds of the members of the Chapter, and thus influences the subsequent voting:

<sup>1</sup> Obedientiaries in Communities of Women bear the titles which obviously correspond.



consequently the answers to questionnaires or referenda should not be taken as the equivalent of votes.

39. *Distinctions between Kinds of Chapter.* There may be distinctions between kinds of Chapter, such as *Greater* and *Ordinary*, *General* and *Special*, the occasion and nature of each being defined by the Statutes. The General Chapter will meet annually at least, and if the Community is organized in Provinces, the Provinces will be represented at it. There may also be *Provincial Chapters*, the decisions of which will normally be of limited scope and subject to revision by the *General Chapter*.

40. *Statutes concerning Chapter.* The Statutes of the Community should define clearly:

- (i) The qualifications for membership of Chapter.
- (ii) The functions to be discharged by the Chapter in the government of the Community, and its relation in this respect to the authority of the Superior, and the matters in which the Superior is bound by its decision.
- (iii) Any distinctions between different kinds of Chapter meeting (*vide* 39).
- (iv) The manner in which the Chapter is to be convened.
- (v) The special rules governing a Chapter summoned for the election of a Superior.
- (vi) The relationship between the Chapter and the Standing Council, if there is one, and the composition and functions of the latter (*vide* 39).

41. *Duties of Chapter.* The principal duties of Chapter may be summarized as follows:

- (i) The election of the Superior.
- (ii) The election of Novices to Profession.
- (iii) Decisions on questions of exclusion.
- (iv) Decisions on alterations in the Statutes or Rule of Life.
- (v) Decisions on any substantial alienation of property, of expenditure of money, the amount requiring the consent of the Chapter being regulated in the Statutes.
- (vi) Decisions on the undertaking or relinquishment of important activities, such as the foundation or closing of Houses.

In addition to such legislative and administrative functions of the Chapter, there may also be occasions when the Superior may wish to consult the Chapter to secure an expression of opinion.

42. *Conduct of Meetings of the Chapter.*

(a) *Notice of Meeting.* Due notice, as required by the Statutes, should be given beforehand, and a summons sent to each member who has the right to attend, together with a copy of the agenda of the Chapter. This summons and the agenda should be sent whether it be expected that the member will be able to attend or not. In any case in which the interests of a private member are concerned,<sup>1</sup> justice requires that he shall have due notice of the proposal in the form in which it will be presented to the Chapter, in order that he may prepare and present his case.

(b) *The President.* A meeting of the Chapter, either of the Community or of the local Province or Branch, will normally be presided over by the appropriate Superior, but in women's Communities the Warden is sometimes entitled by Statute or invitation to take the chair, but without power of voting. The authority of the Superior or President, whoever he may be, is of leadership, not of domination. He is responsible for maintaining the statutory and customary rules of procedure, for securing full exercise of their rights in discussion to all members of Chapter, whatever their rank or age, with impartiality and justice, and for expediting the business of Chapter. The President of Chapter may, of course, put forth his personal view upon any matter under discussion, but is not entitled to impose his own will upon the Chapter.

(c) *Freedom of Debate.* Freedom of debate is essential. The conditions of Religious Life make their own peculiar demands of charity and humility upon all members, which must govern the mutual relations of Superiors and subjects when conferring for the common good. The right of all members to put forward their individual opinions without fear or favour must be secured: they, on their part, should exercise this right with humility and respect.

(d) *Votes.*

(i) *Active and passive votes.* A distinction is made between the "active" and the "passive" vote. By the phrase "active

<sup>1</sup> E.g., sentence of Dismissal, petition for Exclaustration or Secularization, application for Transference.



vote", is meant the right to cast a vote in elections and deliberations of the Chapter; by "passive vote" is meant the right to be elected by the Chapter to any Office which by the Statutes is at its disposal. Thus, for instance, in the election of a Superior, all members of the Chapter will enjoy an active vote, but the passive vote will be restricted to those who in accordance with the Statutes are qualified for election as Superior by age and length of Profession.

(ii) *Qualifications for voting.* Neither the active nor the passive vote should be accorded to those who have not made at least temporary Profession, and the Statutes should contain regulations governing the granting of those rights, with special reference to the length of time since first or final Profession which is required as qualification.

(iii) *Counting of votes.* In all regulations with respect to voting, it should be clearly laid down: whether all qualified to vote must vote (either in person or by proxy) or whether any may refrain from voting, and whether the majority is to be reckoned from the votes actually cast, or whether the votes not cast are to be counted as negative.<sup>1</sup>

In an election to an office (as contrasted with election to Profession) it may be desirable that the number of votes given to each candidate should be announced for the information of the voters. The Statutes should define the course of action to be taken should the voting be inconclusive.

(e) *Votes of Members Absent.* In matters which according to the Constitution can be decided only by the taking of votes, the Statutes should make provision for securing the votes of those

<sup>1</sup> In cases where there are more than two choices it should be stated also whether the majority required is absolute, or relative. Thus, e.g., if A receives three votes, B two, and C two, is A elected, having only a relative majority, or are four votes (an absolute majority) required for election?

Where the number and required majority of votes works out at a fraction of a number (as is often the case where a two-thirds or three-quarters majority is specified), it should be stated whether the nearest whole number is required. Thus, e.g., where a two-thirds majority is required and there are fourteen votes (nine-and-a-half being two-thirds of fourteen) do nine votes elect or are ten required?

Where the majority required is indicated in the form "One adverse vote in so many excludes" the same care should be taken to guard against any doubtfulness, e.g., if there are fifteen votes and one in four excludes, are three adverse votes sufficient to exclude, or are four required?

who by reason of permitted absence or other legitimate cause are not present at the actual meeting of Chapter. This provision applies particularly to electoral voting, where the procedure is normally by secret ballot and without discussion, and to voting for changes in the Rule and Statutes. The vote of an absentee may be recorded either in writing or by his appointing a proxy to act on his behalf; the Statutes should define which method should be employed.

(f) *Responsibility in Voting.* All members are bound in conscience to seek the Will of God for the common good, so far as they can discern it, and to exercise their vote in this sense without regard to private interest or personal predilections or antipathies.

(g) *Unforeseen Business.* In the agenda of meetings of Chapter the heading "Any other business" is often included, in order to permit the discussion of matters not previously foreseen. Care should be taken as far as possible to avoid introducing important matters without notice. Any decision reached on such a matter should if possible be subject to review, so that there may be fuller deliberation, and so that the views of any member absent may be secured at a subsequent meeting when he may be present or represented.

(h) *The Decisions of Chapter.* The Superior, as administrator for the time of his tenure of office, may be required by the Constitution to seek the authority of the Chapter for a certain course of action; in this case he is bound by the decision reached by the votes cast in Chapter, unless exception be provided in the Statutes (*vide* 40 (ii)). Where there is no such obligation, he may desire to have the benefit of the counsel of the Chapter, or the support of its approbation; but in this case, though his action may in fact be in accordance with the advice of the Chapter, the actual responsibility for taking the decision rests with him.

(i) *Minutes.* The agenda, attendance, and careful minutes of each meeting should be recorded in the Chapter Book, the adequacy of this record should be attested at a subsequent meeting by the agreement of those present, and the minutes should then be signed by the President. The Visitor has the right to refer to the Chapter Book, or to any other records concerning any action or decision of the Community which may come under his review.



43. *Appendix to Chapter Government: Corporate Property.* The Constitution of every Religious Community should make careful and detailed provision for the legal ownership and administration of the temporal possessions of the Community: thus, e.g., the property may be vested in a Board of Trustees, or advantage may be taken of the Companies Act, 1929, and competent legal advice should always be taken in all matters of this kind.

## DOCUMENTS

44. (a) The *Constitution* is the body of enactments or Statutes by which the life of a Community as a corporation is administered. The Constitution should open with a preamble setting forth the aims and objects of the Community.

The *Statutes* should define the relation of the Community to ecclesiastical authority, the officials to be appointed within the Community, the terms of admission to membership, the conditions governing cessation of membership, the financial dispositions of the Community with respect to the tenure of property or estate, and the relation of the individual members and the body of the Community to its officers; they should define the mutual obligations between the Community and its members.<sup>1</sup>

Provision should be made in the Statutes for any alteration in the Constitution or Rule which the Community may deem necessary.

(b) The *Rule of Life* is a document setting forth the spiritual, disciplinary, and moral principles by which the lives of all the members should be ordered, the explicit acceptance of which is required as an integral part of the Act of Profession.

(c) The *Customary* or House Rule is a body of regulations by which the daily domestic life of a Convent is ordered. It is not of major importance, as are the Constitution and Rule of Life, and its requirements can be modified with less formality than is required for the alteration of those documents.

<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive schedule of matters which should be provided for in the Constitution, see Appendix 1.

## VOWS

(The treatment of the Vows which here follows is not intended to deal with the ascetical aspects of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, or with the virtues which these Vows protect, but only with the juridical aspects.)

45. *Poverty.* By the Vow of Poverty the Religious seeks detachment from things, and to this end freely renounces all rights over material property of every kind. Consequently, even in those Communities in which property is retained in the name of the individual Religious after Life Profession, he may not dispose of such property without the permission of his Superiors, and all his chattels he shall convey to the Community.

46. *Chastity.* By the Vow of Chastity the Religious seeks detachment from persons, so that by the renunciation of family ties he may be free to devote himself entirely and immediately to Christ. The Vow of Chastity, like any other vow, has reference not to the past, but to the future. In cases where a marriage has been contracted, one party is not free to take Permanent Vows of Religion while the other party is still living, even if the marriage has been dissolved by civil law, or the other party gives consent. Nevertheless, where it is judged that there is no possibility of the marriage being restored, application may be made to the Advisory Council, with a view to seeking from the competent authority a dispensation from this rule. In the Provinces of Canterbury and York, this authority is the Archbishop of Canterbury.

47. *Obedience.*

(a) *Description.* By the Vow of Obedience the Religious seeks detachment from self-will, and to this end submits himself to the authority of his Superiors in accordance with the Rule and Constitution of his Community. He renders this submission in a supernatural spirit of faith, trusting that the Superior's lawful and constitutional exercise of authority represents for him the Will of God. The Superior may not command anything which is contrary to the Law of God, and should he do so, the Religious ought to refuse Obedience.

(b) *Conscience.* The rights and claims of conscience are there-



fore in no way restricted by the obligations of Obedience. When an order appears to conflict with the demands of a well-informed conscience, the difficulty should be clearly and respectfully stated to the Superior making the order; a plea of conscience, however, cannot justify claims inspired either by ignorance or self-will. In any grave difficulty in this respect, counsel should be taken with the Confessor or the Extraordinary Confessor, and an appeal made, in the last resort, to the Visitor.

(c) *The Chapter of Faults* is an assembly of the members of the Community or Religious House, at stated times, or at the discretion of authority, for the public acknowledgement of offences against Rule or Religious Discipline. Both Chapters are presided over by the Superior or his representative, whose function it is to give such public admonition or penance as his discretion may prescribe.

This exercise of Community Life is not to be confused with the spiritual exercise of Sacramental Confession. It is to be concerned solely with the discipline of the common life and Rule, and not at all with moral delinquencies. The matters which are subjects for Sacramental Confession and for Chapter of Faults are therefore distinct; but they may overlap in so far as minor breaches of Rule arise from pride, gluttony, sloth, etc.

(d) *Manifestation of Conscience*. This is a technical term denoting a detailed declaration of the condition of the interior life made in confidence to a Director or other Superior, in order to obtain instruction or guidance, as a means of spiritual advance; such declaration is distinct in manner and different in purpose from the acknowledgements of Sacramental Confession. Superiors may in no case demand such specific manifestation, nor may they use any suasion, direct or indirect, to procure it. But complete openness with the Superior of a Community is desirable for the spiritual health and well-being alike of the Community and of the individual members.

(e) *Dispensation* is the suspension or relaxation of an obligation by a competent authority. In reference to the Religious Life the word is used to signify the suspension or relaxation of one or more of the obligations created by admission to membership in the Community. Except in so far as special provision is made for dispensation in the Statutes or in the Rule of Life, the Superior will be the competent authority for matters within the common life



of the Community. For graver issues, the competent authority may be the Community itself, acting through its Chapter, or the Visitor, or such other agency as may be expressly provided by the Statutes or by Ecclesiastical Law.

48. *The Divine Office* is a liturgical action consisting principally of the orderly recitation of the Psalter, interspersed with readings from the Sacred Scriptures and other holy writings, and with prayers. As its name implies, it is imposed as a duty on those in Holy Orders, and upon other Religious in so far as required by the Rule of their Community. As early as the fifth century the Divine Office had come to be composed of the night-vigil or Matins, and the seven "Hours" of the day, from Lauds to Compline. The underlying principles of its construction (allowing for variations caused by the occurrence of festivals) were the weekly recitation of the Psalter and the reading of Holy Scripture, so far as was deemed appropriate for edification. With the introduction of the English vernacular Book of Common Prayer, the canonical office was reduced to a compendium of Morning and Evening Prayer, with monthly recitation of the Psalter, and the reading of appropriate Scriptures twice in the day. This, while offered to the laity as customary devotion, is imposed upon the clergy as duty or *Officium*.

In the Religious Life, with its express purpose of devotion, the larger and more extended use has been revived, and the recitation of the Hours according to the provision contained in the Breviary is commonly undertaken. The extent of the obligation should be determined in each Community by its Rule.

In some Communities, ecclesiastical authority has allowed Priests Religious to regard the obligation of reciting the Divine Office as discharged by the recitation of this longer form in place of Morning and Evening Prayer.

It is desirable that in active Communities of women, particularly those engaged in pastoral work, the form of the Divine Office used should as far as possible include Morning and Evening Prayer.

49. *Enclosure.*

(a) *Definition.* The Enclosure, with which the word "cloister" is by derivation virtually identical, is that part of the conventual building and its precincts which is strictly private, and reserved for the members of a Religious House, to secure privacy and to



eliminate the danger of possible scandal. The phrase "Rules of Enclosure" denotes the regulations governing the egress of the members of the Community, and the freedom of access to the enclosed buildings or precincts permitted to persons not members of the Community. While every Convent or permanent House of Religious should have some part within Enclosure, the extent of such Enclosure, and the strictness of the regulations which govern it, vary with the character of the Community, and with the local and other conditions. It is obvious, for example, that for the exercise of the Contemplative Life a greater measure of seclusion, and therefore of Enclosure, is required than for the Active.

(b) *Extent*. When a building is erected or set apart as a Conventual House, its Enclosure should be clearly marked off from the rest. There should be rooms outside the enclosure, known as "Parlours" for the reception of visitors or the transaction of business. Women's Communities should also provide a similar room for the use of the Warden or Chaplain.

(c) *The Cell* is a room in a Convent or Religious House assigned to a member of a Community for his sole occupation. Its purpose is to provide complete privacy; and to this end it is usual to have an ordinance in the Rule or Customary forbidding any other member of the House to enter the Cell without special permission of the Superior. The actual use of the Cell in any Community, apart from its privacy in the hours of night, will be determined by Rule, or at least by Custom, and will reflect the general attitude of the Community towards the ideal of solitude. Thus in some Communities the daily life is lived chiefly in public, and the Cell is seldom entered during the day; in others it is not only the resting place of the Religious, but also his study and workroom, and (apart from liturgical worship) the place of his most intimate prayer and communion with God.

(d) *Strict Enclosure*. Where the degree of Enclosure is strict, the use of the parlour by Religious needs the permission of the Superior; there may also be a grille dividing it into two parts. Material and spiritual needs from time to time require the entry into the Enclosure of such persons as priests, doctors, and workmen, in discharge of their respective duties, but in each case, the person concerned should have the express permission of the Superior. Permission to go out of the Enclosure must be regulated by the Statutes. In cases not thus provided for, special sanction must be

sought from the Visitor or the Ordinary, except in grave and sudden emergency, when, although permission may be presumed and acted upon, the matter must be reported to the Visitor at the earliest opportunity. Exit from the Enclosure, except in accordance with statutory provision or by express sanction, is a grave offence.

50. *Recreation.* A period of Recreation should find its place in the normal daily time-table of the Community, except where the Rule of Silence prevents it. It is presided over by the Superior, or his representative, and is a Community exercise, absence from which requires express permission. Its purpose is not only relaxation, but also edification, and the cultivation of humility and charity by the disciplined exercise of the social life of the Religious Family. It thus provides a safeguard against the formation of cliques.

Relaxation may also in some measure be secured by a change of work, e.g., periods of garden work for those engaged in study, spiritual reading for those whose work is chiefly manual. But there ought also to be some occasions in the daily time-table of every Religious even in the Novitiate, when he has a limited but real discretion as to how he employs himself.



## EXCURSUS I

### BENEDICTINISM

AMIDST the considerable variety of Religious Institutions in the West the Order of St Benedict holds a unique place, both because it is the source from which the more modern organizations have developed, and also because, in certain particulars, the Order itself has stood apart from this development.

Now that we have in the Anglican Communion Benedictine Houses of many years' standing, which provide a vital element in the revival of the Religious Life amongst us, it seems necessary that this Directory should call attention to certain matters, mainly of emphasis and proportion, in which the Benedictine system differs from that which has been dealt with in the preceding pages of this book.

1. In the first place, the Order of St Benedict is not an "Order" in the sense in which that word is applied to the later medieval Orders, such as the Franciscans or Dominicans, which grow from a single centre and remain under its control. The Benedictine house is an autonomous unit, and this makes possible authentic foundations of the Order within the Anglican Communion. St Gregory describes the Holy Rule as "remarkable for its discretion and rich in its teaching", and its combined simplicity and comprehensiveness is the basic quality which, as history shows, has made it the inspiration of many different races in each succeeding century, and capable of adaptation to varying circumstances.

The author of *The Monastic Order in England*, writing of the transitional period of the Dark Ages, remarks: "If the Rule holds within it so much of the wisdom and experience of the past, its anticipation of the needs of the future is even more striking." This is true of Benedictinism in all ages of transition, not least in the present day.

2. A salient point in the spirit of the Holy Rule is the position of the Abbot in relation to the members of his House. His appointment, as provided in the Holy Rule, is for life, and differs thus in its ideal quality from the relation of a Superior who is elected for

a term of years only. To St Benedict the monastery is the home of a spiritual family, where all the sons live in mutual love and trust, under the patriarchal authority of an Abbot, who represents Christ in the Community.

The Abbot is the pivot on which the life of the monastery turns; but his authority is by no means unlimited or arbitrary, for St Benedict lays down that he is to take counsel with the whole community on all important matters, and with the Seniors on matters of less importance. In modern times Chapter control is required in such matters as: (a) election for Profession, (b) alienation of property, and (c) changes in the character of the Life.

3. The Benedictine vows, as laid down in the Holy Rule, are Stability, Conversion of character, and Obedience. The renunciations expressed in the three Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, which are of the essence of the monastic state, were adopted by St Benedict without compromise, and are included as integral parts of the life of the Rule. Those professed according to St Benedict's formula are bound to Poverty and Chastity in exactly the same manner as those who take the ordinary Religious Vows. Benedictines thus take the equivalent of five Vows. By the Vow of Stability the monk is bound to "persevere till death in the monastery of his profession" (Holy Rule). To the Benedictine, Stability must mean a permanent life in Community, and in the Community of his Profession. Yet the Vow of Stability is not, like the Vow of Chastity, a thing absolute that may never be modified, for it has always been held that given sufficient reason for so doing, such as a call to the Episcopate or the foundation of a new monastery, lawful authority has the power of over-ruling it in the case of the individual monk. The Vow of *conversatio morum* obliges the monk to a lifelong striving after perfection.

4. The Benedictine Vows are technically "solemn" (*vide* 24). A minimum of three years in Temporary Vows dispensable by the Community is required between the Novitiate and final Profession. Temporary Vows are taken for the whole period, not renewed annually. One further period in such Vows may be required by the Chapter, or asked for by the monk, but it must not exceed three years, and may be less.

5. The sole purpose of the Benedictine is to live in his monastery to the glory of God, in the threefold service of self-discipline, prayer, and work. In this three-fold service St Benedict lays down



that nothing be preferred to the solemn recitation of the Choir Office, which he dignifies with the name of *Opus Dei*, and for which he makes careful provision; to this duty by universal and very ancient custom has been added the daily celebration of the Conventual Mass. The general tendency of Benedictine tradition in respect of this daily liturgical worship has been in the direction of dignity and splendour. Every monk in solemn vows must recite his Office, either in Choir or privately.

6. The Constitutions of a Benedictine Abbey do not need to be as comprehensive as those of a modern community, since much ground is already covered by the Holy Rule. They should, however, provide for: (a) a precise method of electing an Abbot, (b) the procedure, step by step, to the taking of Life Vows, (c) the method of holding property and of dealing with life interests, (d) the election of a Visitor, (e) any limitation of the authority of the Abbot by vote of the Chapter or Council, and (f) the release or dismissal of those in Simple Vows.

7. The provision made by the Holy Rule for the offering of young children to God in the monastery fell into abeyance with the decay of paternal authority, and now only those who have attained legal majority may make the Vows. But the oblation of children has left its mark in the very widespread attachment to Benedictine monasteries both of seculars and also of persons under Vows; these are alike known as Oblates. Benedictine Oblates may live under Rule in the monastery (with or without a religious Habit) in which case they are called Intern Oblates. The rule which they keep is a matter of arrangement between each Oblate and the Abbot of the monastery to which he is attached. Properly speaking, such Oblates do not form a Third Order; each belongs, as does each monk, to the monastery of his Profession. Extern Oblates of either sex may be attached to any Abbey.

All that has been said above refers to Houses of either men or women. In the case of Houses of Nuns the enclosure required is of the stricter kind (*vide* 49).

## EXCURSUS 2

## SOLITARIES

THE terms *Anchorite* (*Anchoress* or *Ancress*), *Hermit*, *Recluse*, *Solitary*, are all alike used to denote persons who devote themselves to the rare and difficult vocation of living the Contemplative Life in solitude. These fall into two classes:

1. Those who assume the Eremitical Life under such a Rule as they may individually undertake in obedience to their spiritual director. Such people cannot be termed Religious, unless they are living under Permanent Vows, and with ecclesiastical sanction. Perpetual Obedience cannot be owed to an individual who may predecease the person making the Vow, or be otherwise incapacitated from discharging his responsibility. Ultimate responsibility therefore rests with the Bishop of the diocese in which the persons concerned wish to reside.

The spiritual director must in the first instance take the utmost care to satisfy himself as to the genuineness of the vocation and the suitability of the proposed arrangement for domicile, and to test the proposed Rule over an adequate period, adapting it to the needs of the individual. He should then report the case to the Bishop who, after such inquiry as he deems necessary, may admit the Solitary to Temporary Vows for a period of five years. The Bishop should place him under a spiritual director, who may or may not be the same person and who must be competent for the task, and reasonably accessible.

At the end of this period, if the spiritual director is satisfied that the Solitary should proceed to Permanent Vows, he should make a report to the Bishop, covering the following matters:

- (i) The spiritual condition of the Solitary, and his fitness for Permanent Vows.
- (ii) The conditions of Enclosure.<sup>1</sup>
- (iii) His physical health.
- (iv) His financial stability.

If the Bishop is satisfied as to these matters, he may then admit him to Permanent Vows. The Vow of Obedience is taken to the

<sup>1</sup> If there is a Religious Community in the vicinity, it may conveniently supervise the material conditions of the Solitary's life.



Bishop, the Solitary rendering the same obedience to the director as his deputy.

2. Those who are admitted to the Eremitical Life as members of a recognized Order or Community and having taken the vows of Religion, are therefore truly Religious. With regard to these, it is necessary that the place and other conditions of the life proposed should have the sanction of the governing body of the Community, and of the Visitor, and that the individual should remain under obedience to the Superior of the Community.

## EXCURSUS 3

## OBLATE, THIRD ORDER, TERTIARY

THESE terms have reference to persons or groups of persons who are admitted to a close affiliation with a Religious Community, though they themselves are not actual members of it. The measure of relationship that may be accorded varies widely.

The fundamental ideas which govern such association of externs may be taken to be: (a) the purpose of aiming at Christian perfection according to the distinctive spiritual principles of a given Community; (b) the inclusion within this outer circle of many persons who, though seeking perfection in that way, either have no Religious vocation or are debarred by circumstances from undertaking the obligations which the Community vocation would impose.

For the distinctive characteristic of Benedictine Oblates *vide Benedictinism*, p. 45. For the status of Oblates or Tertiaries in association with other Congregations the following points may be noted:

1. The Oblates or Tertiaries may live in, or closely attached to, the Convent or Religious House with which they are associated, sharing in such measure as may be appointed in the life and devotions of the Community.

2. They may live apart from the Community in a society of their own, following a Rule and governed by a Constitution provided by the authority of the Community.

3. They may be individually attached to the Community by the spiritual bond of their devotion, by their dependence on

the Community and the general control of its authority, and by their acceptance of a Rule authorized by the Community, while living in the Secular State and discharging the normal duties of that State.

It is obvious that members of the first and second categories will embrace the celibate life so long as they retain their membership, though (except as a matter of private devotion) they will not be bound by a Vow of Chastity. The third category will include married persons as well as celibates. For this reason, among others, it may be expected that vocations to the third category will be far more numerous than those to the first and second.



APPENDIX I

SCHEDULE OF MATTERS TO BE PROVIDED FOR IN  
CONSTITUTIONS

1. Preamble. The Objects of the Community.
2. Community Obligations.
  - (a) Choir Office (48).
  - (b) Work.
  - (c) Enclosure (49).
    - (i) Character.
    - (ii) Regulation.
    - (iii) Permission to leave.
3. Visitor (32).
  - (a) Appointment.
  - (b) Extent of responsibility.
  - (c) Provision for
    - (i) visitation;
    - (ii) appeals;
    - (iii) other duties.
4. Superior (36).
  - (a) By whom and how elected.
  - (b) Duration of office.
  - (c) Provision for termination of office.
  - (d) Duties and rights.
  - (e) Relation to Chapter (and Council if there is one).
  - (f) Whether he appoints Obedientiaries.
5. Obedientiaries (37).
  - (a) Duties.
  - (b) Qualifications.
  - (c) How and by whom appointed and dismissed.
6. Chapter (38-42).
  - (a) Constitution.
  - (b) Functions and authority.
  - (c) Matters on which Superior is bound by its vote.
  - (d) President.
  - (e) Qualification of members.
  - (f) Duration of membership.
  - (g) By whom appointed or elected.
  - (h) Manner of convening.
  - (i) Fixed times at which Chapters are to be held.
  - (j) Special rules of procedure.
  - (k) Character of votes required for specific objects.
  - (l) Method of voting.
  - (m) Votes of absent members.
7. Council (if there be one) (38).
  - (a)-(m) as in 6.
  - (n) Relations of Council to Chapter.

8. Warden (33).
  - (a) By whom and how appointed.
  - (b) Duration of Office.
  - (c) Reappointment.
  - (d) Termination of office.
  - (e) Responsibilities and duties in regard to:
    - (i) Superior.
    - (ii) Chapter.
    - (iii) Chapel, Services, etc.
    - (iv) Chaplains.
    - (v) Community works, Branch Houses, etc.
    - (vi) Matters in which he has a right to veto.
    - (vii) Rights of access and appeal.
9. Chaplains (34).
  - (a)-(d) as in 8.
  - (e) Responsibilities and duties in regard to:
    - (i) Warden.
    - (ii) Community.
    - (iii) Other persons.
10. Confessor Extraordinary (35b).
  - (a)-(d) as in 8.
  - (e) (i)-(ii) as in 9.
11. Postulancy (18).
  - (a) Who accepts.
  - (b) Minimum age for admission.
  - (c) Requirements (e.g., dowry, health, ecclesiastical recommendation, baptism, confirmation, consent of parents or guardians for minors).
  - (d) Duration (minimum and maximum).
  - (e) Dismissal, by whom.
12. Novitiate (19).
  - (a), (b), (d), (e) as in 11.
  - (f) Freedom to leave.
13. Profession (20).
  - (a) By whom elected and on whose initiative (at each stage if more than one).
  - (b) Minimum age (at each stage).
  - (c) Quality of Vows:
    - (i) Temporary.
    - (ii) Temporary leading to Perpetual.
    - (iii) Perpetual.
  - (d) Formula of Profession.
  - (e) What authority may grant dispensation.
  - (f) Rights and privileges of Professed.

In the case of Temporary Vows leading to Perpetual:

  - (g) Minimum and maximum period of duration.
  - (h) Conditions of renewal.
  - (i) Terms of release or dispensation.
  - (j) Authority granting permission for Perpetual Vows.
14. Release (27).
  - A. Exclauration (28)
    - (a) By whom.
    - (b) With what effects.



- B. Transference (29).
  - (a) By whom.
  - (b) Method.
  - (c) With what effects.
- C. Dismissal (30).
  - (a) By whom.
  - (b) With what effects.
- D. Secularization (31).
- 15. Property (17, 43).
  - A. Community property (43).
    - (a) Its nature.
    - (b) By whom legally owned.
  - B. Individual property (17).
    - (a) Administration of property of Novices and those in Temporary Vows.
    - (b) Whether members retain possession or not.
    - (c) Members to make their wills on Profession or not.
    - (d) Property acquired after Profession.
    - (e) Management of life interests.

## APPENDIX 2

## SUGGESTED FORM OF VISITATION

1. Reception of Visitor and his Assessors by Superiors.
  2. When he is vested, the Visitor shall be conducted to the Chapel, where all members of the Community shall be assembled. After prayer he may address the Community briefly as to the purpose of the Visitation.
  3. The Visitor shall then proceed to the Chapter Room, or other fit and convenient place, where he shall be provided with a copy of the Rule and Statutes of the Community. The Superior shall also submit such statement of the affairs of the House or Community as he shall require, that he may satisfy himself as to the financial position.
  4. The Visitor shall then proceed to the personal visitation, and he and his Assessors if any shall interview in turn privately, first the Superiors and afterwards all professed members of the Community resident in the House. Leave of absence from the Visitation must in each case be sanctioned by the Visitor, due application having been made. The Superiors of Branch Houses shall also be cited to the Visitation with at least one representative chosen by the professed members of such Branch Houses. Any Religious who may express a desire to be interviewed shall be given facilities to attend.
- The Visitor and his Assessors shall have full power to interrogate each individual, and the interview shall be privileged; it shall be confidential, and Superiors shall have no right to interfere with the freedom of the subject.
5. At the conclusion, the Visitor shall return to the Chapel to close the visitation, and shall then, or at some later time, deliver a Charge to the Community.
  6. The Visitation shall be closed with the episcopal blessing.

### APPENDIX 3

## QUESTIONS PRELIMINARY TO A PRIMARY VISITATION

1. What is the number of Professed members of the Community?
2. Is the Community Cloistered or Active? If the former, have any infringements of Enclosure occurred? If the latter, what are its activities?
3. Are there any dependent Houses? If so, state number and the locality of each.
4. Are there any Branch or Affiliated Houses abroad? If so are they—  
(a) definitely missions among the heathen? (b) in the Dominions? What is their relation to the central government of the Community and the local diocesan authority?
5. What provision is made for permanent or occasional spiritual ministrations in the Community?
6. (a) How many priests are specifically licensed for the service of the Community? (b) Are Extraordinary Confessors appointed? If so, who are they?
7. What is the period of the Novitiate, and what provision is made for training the Novices?
8. Is lifelong Profession required by the Community or are all Professions for a period only?
9. If final Profession is lifelong is there any intermediate stage of temporary Profession between it and the Novitiate?
10. Is any form of dispensation from Community obligations provided for in the Statutes? Is there statutory provision for the cession of the obligation of the Vows of Professed Religious?
11. Are the Professed bound by the customary Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience? Are there any other Vows?
12. Is a dowry required at or before Profession? Is the property or capital of the Professed finally alienated on Profession?
13. By whom or by what body is the Community governed, more especially in respect to the making or alteration of the Rule Constitution?
14. By whom is the Superior elected and for what period?
15. What forms of Profession are used for (a) Temporary, (b) Permanent Vows?
16. Are any members of the Community working in isolation or living apart from the Community?
17. How is the property of the Community held?
18. Are the accounts audited and by whom?



#### APPENDIX 4

### QUESTIONS PRELIMINARY TO SUBSEQUENT VISITATIONS

1. Have any new works been taken in hand or Houses founded since the last Visitation?
2. Have any Houses been closed or undertakings abandoned during that period?
3. How many Novices have received the Habit?
4. How many Novices have been admitted to Vows, whether temporary or final?
5. How many Novices are there at present in the Novitiate?
6. Has the ratification of the Visitor been procured previously for the Professions made?
7. Is care taken that all Novices are thoroughly instructed in the Rule of Life and governing Statutes of the Community before being proposed for election to Profession?
8. Have any members of the Community been released and in what way?
9. In the case of any members separated from the Community, have any steps been taken with regard to dispensation from the Vows? If so, to what ecclesiastical authority has the matter been referred?
10. In any case of Transference has care been taken to secure that the recipient Community undertakes and is able to provide maintenance and spiritual provision as permanent as has been previously secured? Has such Transference been ratified by the Visitors of both the Communities concerned?
11. How many Religious are there at present with Temporary Vows? How many with Perpetual Vows?
12. Have the Temporary Vows been renewed at the proper time?
13. How many Religious with Temporary Vows have failed to go forward to Final Profession: (a) through their own withdrawal; (b) through the determination of the statutory authorities of the Community?
14. Are there any members of the Community at present living outside the Community? If so, have they been granted formal Exclaustration or at least leave of absence?
15. Are there any members who have absented themselves without permission, and have refused to return when summoned? If so, what action has been taken?
16. Has there been in all Houses of the Community a faithful observance of the spiritual exercises prescribed by the Rule?
17. Is due provision made for the Confessions of the Religious by Confessors appointed by the Community and having due ecclesiastical authority?
18. Is provision made for relief of conscience in particular cases either

by the appointment of an Extraordinary Confessor or by such special arrangement as the occasion may require?

19. Do the Superiors exercise control over the literature, spiritual or otherwise, to which the Religious have access?

20. Have the Superiors kept vigilant control over the discipline of all Branch Houses by personal visitation or on report of delegated visitors?

21. Are satisfactory arrangements made to meet the spiritual requirements of the life in Branch Houses as well as in the Mother House?

22. Have any requests that may have been made for appeal to the Visitor by individual members received due attention?

23. In the government or administration of the Community where action by the Chapter or by a Council is required by the Statutes, has due notice of the agenda been given on all occasions? And have all members of the Chapter or Council had complete freedom in the deliberations?

24. Have such meetings of Chapter or Council as are prescribed by the Statutes been duly held?

25. Are there any present difficulties in the relations between the Community and the ecclesiastical authorities, the Chaplains, or the Confessors?

26. Have the accounts been audited and by whom?

#### APPENDIX 5

#### INSTRUMENT OF SECULARIZATION

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that WHEREAS .....  
 ..... known in Religion as ..... a .....  
 in ..... Vows of the ..... now resident at .....  
 ..... within Our Diocese and juris-  
 diction has been ..... from the .....  
 aforesaid AND WHEREAS an application for Secularization has been  
 made to us by the said .....

WE ..... by Divine permission Lord Bishop of .....  
 after full examination do hereby dispense and release .....  
 from the Vows of Religion and declare ..... to be no longer a  
 Religious.

Given under Our hand this ..... day of ..... in the  
 year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and .....